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The Practice of Physic;

PARTICULARLY IN

Gouty, Rheumatic, and Hyfterical
C A S E S:

In which are related some recent and extraor-
dinary Cures of the Gout,

Performed on Gentlemen of Credit and Property,

By a Course of Medicines no less safe than
efficacious.

By D. S M I T H, M. D.

Printed for CARNAN and NEWBERRY, in St. Paul's Church-
yard: Where may be had, by the same Author, *A Letter to*
Doctor CADOGAN; and *Observations on Doctor WILLI-*
AMS'S Treatise on the Gout.

[Price S I X - P E N C E.]



An APOLOGY, &c.

WHEN I wrote my Letter to Doctor CADOGAN, on the subject of the Gout, there was nothing farther from my thoughts than a design of practising physic: nor should I indeed have published that letter, but at the particular solicitation of some friends, who knew how different my opinion was from that of the Doctor, with regard to the cause of the Gout and the effects of medicine. They observed that my recovery from the fits of the Gout was not like other people's; and, as they knew with what intense application I had studied the subject of this disease, they thought my remarks would be of considerable use to gouty men in general. An attention to this circumstance was my sole motive for the publication of that letter. At that time I had never
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tried the effect of my medicines on any one but myself; nor perhaps ever should, but for that public address; tho' I did upon all occasions declare my readiness to administer them within the private circle of my own acquaintance. All topical applications for this complaint were (before Doctor CADOGAN published his Treatise on the Gout) held as certainly destructive. It was therefore in vain to combat with this prejudice, notwithstanding my happy and speedy recoveries. However, in consequence of that publication, I had the pleasing satisfaction of receiving fundry letters from some very eminent and distinguished gentlemen of the faculty, expressing their approbation of it. It likewise produced applications from many people afflicted with the Gout, who now became very desirous (from what I had wrote) of trying the same means which had so eminently relieved me. I did not refuse the medicines to any of my neighbours, where I could be a witness of their being properly used; and I
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had the grateful pleasure of seeing their success on every one who tried them.— Their good effect indeed on some gentlemen was so surprising, that I shall not rest the relation of it on my single testimony. I am not afraid of any impeachment of my own veracity ; but the public have a right to every species of evidence in all matters in which they are interested, more particularly in those which regard their health, the most valuable of all terrestrial enjoyments.

THE bare hint to those gentlemen of the necessity of their testimony was sufficient ; and they have authorised me to say, that every thing related of them in this pamphlet is strictly true. The public are certainly as much indebted to them for this candor as myself ; as it most obviously flows from that liberality and universal benevolence which does honor to human nature.

THE first gentleman that tried my medicines was the Rev. Mr. CAMPLIN, in *Bristol*. He had a severe fit of the GOUT, which attacked him in his feet, which, when I first saw him were much swollen and inflamed, the inflammation going off, I might now have made a merit of instantly relieving him; but such pitiful arts will never be practised by those, whose views are truly directed to serve mankind. I told Mr. CAMPLIN that it appeared to me his fit was going off, and therefore recommended it to him to have only the worst foot anointed, in order to see how much sooner that would recover it's tone than the other: at the same time I pressed him constantly to take the internal medicine, in order to prevent a relapse, by expunging from his habit the remaining peccant humour, which I was well persuaded was still there. He soon grew better, and the anointed foot perceptibly recovered it's tone before the other: but having neglected the use of the internal medicine, and being obliged to give

an unusual long attendance at a funeral in very frosty weather, he caught a violent cold, which brought on a relapse of the Gout. He was now attacked in the great toe of that foot which had not been anointed, which was highly inflamed and extremely painful: the liniment was applied at a proper time, in order to prove it's anodine quality; it had the desired effect, and removed the pain immediately. In three days after Mr. CAMPLIN put on his common shoes, and did duty at the Cathedral: not many days intervened before he was able in a severe frost to visit a gentleman on foot, at the distance of six miles from his own house; and the next morning returning the same way, has continued free from the Gout ever since.

I do not from hence infer that Mr. CAMPLIN is radically cured of the Gout; I am thoroughly convinced no such thing can reasonably be expected in every constitution; and I cannot help thinking, that he
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who arrogantly promises such a cure must be either ignorant or dishonest; his vain pretences must arise from his want of a perfect knowledge of the human frame, the nature of the disease, and the power of medicine; or from a design to make a property of the patient, which has been lately done, to the scandal of physic, the discredit of the practitioner, and the manifest injury of the patient. I believe, however that those who have brought on the gout by indolence and intemperance may sometimes get rid of it again by an opposite mode of living; I had once an opportunity of seeing this verified: A gentleman (I had the honor of being known to) observing a labouring man very industrious, and of a remarkable civil deportment, made him his gate-porter: the man had now the range of his patron's kitchen and cellar, the produce of which he grew extremely fond of, and in a few years became very gouty: at the same time growing indolent and insolent he was dismissed

missed from his place; and consequently, being obliged to return to his former abstemious and laborious life, he never had the Gout afterwards.

ON the other hand, I have known many instances of poor labouring men who have been (notwithstanding their great exercise and necessary abstinence) severely afflicted with the Gout. From these instances, it is demonstrable, indolence and intemperance produce the same effect in some constitutions which nature does in others, and which cannot totally be prevented by any means whatever; at least by no other means but such as I fear no gentleman will submit to: happy therefore, unspeakably happy is it, that the power of medicine will give immediate ease in the most excruciating paroxysms of the Gout, considerably shorten the fits, and restore to health a languid gouty constitution; and that it will do this, my own personal experience, and that of the other gentlemen

who have submitted to my practice, will most evidently prove; and will, I hope, exculpate me from the wretched imputation of being a vain and arrogant pretender to the healing art; an art which, when fairly and honestly pursued, has ever been considered as highly honorable, and deserving every liberal encouragement.

IF an invidious reader should surmise I have made these reflections with a principal view to promote my own practice and the sale of my medicines, I can only say he does not do me justice. My former sufferings, and the sufferings of those friends who were exceedingly dear to me, have created in me a tender feeling for the miseries of gouty people in general, and a strong desire of relieving them: and why should it be supposed, by these miserable objects of compassion, that the great, glorious, and beneficent Almighty Being has withheld from them those remedies for their disorder, which he has so indulgently provided

provided and given to others? I wish young people in particular, who are attacked with the Gout, seriously to consider those dreadful consequences of this disease, which so often present themselves to public view, but which, by a skilful use of medicine, may be effectually and safely prevented.

Thus much I may with strict propriety be allowed to say, as I have not for fifteen years past received the least apparent injury from the Gout; in the course of which time I have seen numbers of young and middle-aged people cut off by this fatal disease; and others rendered miserable cripples; a condition perhaps worse than death itself. And when I reflect on the pain I formerly suffered, and consider the apparent injury the Gout did to my person and constitution, how do I lament that those remedies now offered to the public were then unknown to me!

THE next gentleman who tried my medicines was Mr. PAULIN, on the *North-parade* in *Bath*. He had been afflicted with the Gout for twelve years : the fit in which I attended him had tortured him with little intermission for six months ; at which time he was attacked again with great violence in his knees : in this situation every thing having been done for him, it was recommended by a gentleman of the faculty to procure my assistance. Mr. PAULIN was at a loss how to do this, as I had publicly declared I would take no fees, and was wholly unknown to him. Mr. GYDE was now pointed out as one who knew me : he kindly undertook the office of soliciting my attendance on Mr. PAULIN, and came express to *Ashton* for this purpose. Mr. GYDE was a person I had a singular pleasure in obliging, and therefore at his earnest request I waited on Mr. PAULIN, whom I found in bed.

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HE gave me a circumstantial account of his constitution, and the nature of his complaints ; I assured him of relief, provided he exactly followed my directions ; which he promised most punctually to do : I then saw his knees well anointed with the liniment : In about half an hour Mr. PAULIN declared he was perfectly free from pain, and was able to extend his leg, which was before contracted. Three weeks after this he very politely made me a visit at *Ashton*, that I might have the pleasing satisfaction of enjoying his recovery ; he likewise brought his apothecary with him, who declared Mr. PAULIN appeared to him to be then in a better state of health than he had been in for five years before : the same remark was made of him four months after by Mrs. PAULIN, and likewise by many of his friends at *Bath*.

IT is natural to suppose Mr. PAULIN's recovery was much talked of, and produced other applications. One was now made to

me by a very sensible and polite man in favour of his friend THOMAS GILBERT, Esq; of *Bathwick*, whose case he told me, was both a singular and melancholy one; for that he had, in consequence of a fit of the gout, totally lost the use of his legs; had tried the hot-bath, the dry pump, and every other common method of relief to no purpose, and therefore despaired of any: He asked me what I thought of his case, and desired I would ingenuously tell him whether there was any chance of his recovery by the means of those medicines which had so remarkably relieved Mr. PAULIN. I candidly answered him, that I thought Mr. GILBERT's case was so bad there was but little room for him to expect relief; however that I would readily make him a visit when I should be enabled to be more explicit. I agreed with that gentleman on the day of meeting him at *Bath*, when he was to introduce me to Mr. GILBERT; which he accordingly did: I found Mr. GILBERT in his armed chair, exactly answering the descrip-

description before given of him : He confirmed what his friend had related, and added, that he had been afflicted with the gout for twenty years past ; that subsequent to his last fit he was slightly struck with the palsy, of which, however, he was perfectly recovered. Soon after he was severely attacked with the gout, which held him for five months, and on going off left him in that miserable condition he then appeared in. His own account rendered his recovery still more doubtful : I, however, ordered his legs to be tenderly stretched out, in order to judge whether his weakness was owing to a contraction or relaxation : It was some time before he complained of any pain, not indeed 'till his legs were almost extended. I had now some little hopes of relieving him, tho' I did not give him any, as I hold it an act of cruelty to feed a man with the hopes of a cure which is extremely uncertain. I assured him the internal medicine would greatly improve his health, and that the external application could not make him

him worse : He had great confidence in the remedies, and most exactly used them agreeably to the directions I gave him: He soon found benefit from them, and was enabled in about six weeks to walk across his room, without the assistance even of a stick : His general state of health is likewise so greatly improved, that the last time I had the pleasure to see him (which was not more than three months from the time he began the use of the medicines) he told me with a distinguished pleasure, that he had that morning walked a mile or more.

THESE repeated applications convinced me that I could not withhold my assistance thus earnestly sought for, and successfully applied, without a manifest act of inhumanity ; nor would my situation in life permit me with prudence to attend gouty patients at such a distance from my own house without a reasonable compensation. On these considerations I determined to
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present the public with the secret of my medicines, the method of preparing them, and the directions to be observed in their use and application. Here my friends warmly interposed, and observed, that as I had made those discoveries with great labour, and at the risk of my life, it would be an act of injustice to my family, not to make some advantage of them, more particularly as the gout generally fell on those people who were so well able to pay for a remedy. It was in vain for me to urge, that in my Letter to Doctor CADOGAN I had said, “ If I can establish the certain efficacy
 “ of this method of relief which has done
 “ me such signal service, I intend to give
 “ it to the public for the benefit of my
 “ fellow-sufferers.” Notwithstanding this plea, my friends insisted on the prior claim of my family and assured me farther, that tho’ I had declared I would never practise physic, yet the public had a right to call on me to retract that declaration, if it appeared I could be useful in the profession.

I SHALL not undertake to defend these principles, and can only say, that had my fortune been as easy as I could wish, I should have strictly adhered to my first declaration.

THE first step I took in consequence of my friends remonstrance was to propose the publication of my medicines by subscription, intending by this means that those in affluent circumstances might have an opportunity of procuring relief to their poorer fellow-sufferers, and that all gouty people in general should reap the benefit of my labours. This proposal was not accepted, and yet I am constantly called on both for my advice and medicines. For these reasons I found myself under the necessity of complying with the earnest solicitations of my family and friends to practise as a physician. But as it will be impossible for me to attend patients at a considerable distance, and being truly desirous that every person afflicted with the gout, may partake of the inestimable benefit I have in so eminent a degree

degree received, I shall not scruple to supply such with the medicines as are beyond the reach of my personal visits, and will also furnish them with the most ample instructions for their use and application.

If these are strictly followed, I can with confidence assert every gouty subject will receive benefit from the remedies, provided their vital powers are not injured; and even in this case, their sufferings may be mitigated, and their lives prolonged. But let me again repeat the necessity of a strict and most exact attention to those instructions; since it will otherwise be in vain to expect success; for if you are determined to adopt them only in part, and at the same time attach yourself to your own opinion and practice, you will be as much deceived as that man, who wanting to drive his carriage up a hill, fixes one horse before and the other behind: In that case, as in this, the ground gained by one, will be lost by the other.

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WITH respect to the safety of the medicines, they are so perfectly innocent, that they may be administered without danger to an infant of two years old. I must however observe, that the least variation in their composition may prove fatal; and this I do not say without sufficient reason. This circumstance is mentioned in order to prevent unskilful people from administering such remedies as they may think like them.

I BELIEVE it impossible for the most expert Chymist exactly to analyze them, and I declare upon my honour and credit, they are not in any medical book whatever, and perfectly unknown to any one but myself.

I FLATTER myself the impartial part of mankind will not blame me for retaining the secret of my medicines (for the reasons before given) considering their inestimable value: Nor will it, I hope, be thought illiberal to furnish those with them, who from their distant situation cannot apply for my
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personal assistance. Indeed had I sold the medicines by common agents, the example of some very eminent physicians, both amongst the ancients and moderns, would have justified the practice. Among the latter I mention with respect Doctor JAMES, whose excellent powders have proved so extensively useful and salutary, which they never could have been, had they been confined merely within the sphere of his own practice.

It will perhaps be expected that I should give my reasons for preferring gouty, rheumatic, and hysterical patients in the course of my proposed practice. Their diseases I have more immediately studied, and therefore with some propriety can say, I am better qualified to treat them. It must however be supposed, that every man who has entered deeply into the science of physic, must be acquainted with the general method of treating most diseases; yet as the knowledge of human nature is limited to certain bounds, and as perfection is not the happy
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portion of mankind, I am persuaded, if physicians would reduce the great variety of diseases poor unhappy mortals are subject to, into different classes, and each physician choose that class his genius prompts him to study, the divine art of healing in all probability would be much improved, and consequently the sick more effectually helped, and more easily restored. A divided attention in any science cannot operate so quickly or so surely as that which is confined to a particular object.

CONSCIOUS of the limitation of human knowledge, I have chosen to direct my little share of it to the study of these diseases, diseases which (however singular I may be in my opinion) I am persuaded owe their origin to the same cause, an acrid and distempered bile. The two first complaints, some physicians have insisted on are the same, while others have contended for their being distinct diseases: in support of this last opinion it is observed, the diagnostic

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noſticks of the diſorder are certainly different; the blood, however, both of gouty and rheumatic ſubjects is nearly the ſame, (viz.) extremely ſizey and highly inflamed. To ſay with preciſion what is the cauſe of the different ſymptoms of theſe diſorders, is not perhaps in the power of finite reaſoners: Experience and attentive obſervation have however convinced me, that the Gout and Rheumatism are cured by nearly the ſame means; the pain in both caſes is quickly to be removed, the immediate cauſe of the diſorder corrected, and the health of the patient ſoon reſtored.

It too often happens that theſe diſorders are moſt improperly treated in their infancy, whereby the recovery of the patient's health and activity is often rendered very difficult, if not impoſſible. I muſt here remark; however offensive it may be to people ſubject to theſe complaints, that this error is principally owing to themſelves, and not the faculty. The phyſician is ſeldom called

led in, till the patient and his attendants have tried every nostrum they have heard recommended for the supposed disorder. After they have gone round this circle, and have, in consequence of it, heightened the disease from their mistaken opinion and wrong treatment of it, then it is they call for that assistance, which, if it had been timely procured, the sick might have been easily restored, and those fatal symptoms been prevented, which were brought on by original mismanagement.

THERE is a common proverb in the English language which I will venture to pronounce has been the death of thousands: (viz.) that “At the age of thirty a man is “either a fool or a physician.” If this proverb was only extended to the non-naturals, (as they are called) perhaps it might be just and useful; as it is easy enough for a person at that age to discover the advantages of living in good air, and that excess either in eating or drinking, too much or too little sleep,

sleep, great indolence or injudicious exercise, and an improper exertion of the passions are highly pernicious : but the misfortune is, that men presume upon this proverb, and think it extends to the medicinal treatment of diseases in general : unhappy presumption ! If those who are so fond of that proverb, and who in consequence of it so often quack with themselves, would but reflect a moment on the nature and curious formation of the animal machine, I think they would be less presuming, and more cautious in attempting to restore it, when it unfortunately happens to be disordered. If their watch is by any means injured, they immediately employ a proper person to repair it, tho' they have an opportunity of accurately examining every wheel, pin, and spring of this little machine, to find out it's defect. How differently do they act with regard to themselves ? If they are disordered in any respect, they at once conclude they know the cause, and immediately apply the remedy : strange infatua-

tion ! that in the first trifling instance they give up their judgment, yet in the other, tho' of such consequence, presume on their knowledge of the human machine, which is a thousand times more complicated, and therefore more difficult to be understood. What can be more evident ? does not every day's experience prove, that many gentlemen of the profession, tho' formed by art and nature for the study of physic, often find themselves at a loss to account for some disorders incident to the human body : in this case men of the greatest skill act with the greatest caution, and by waiting on nature and her operations, prevent those deadly consequences, which ignorant and presuming people bring on themselves and others, by a hasty and officious administration of improper medicines.

THE various dispensatories which have been published, with the thousands, and tens of thousands of receipts for curing diseases, have perhaps in some degree given
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rise to this general itch of quackery ; and could their authors have conveyed to the readers the means to judge of diseases, together with the recipes for curing them, something might be said in excuse for so general a practice of physic. But this art is not to be acquired by reading dispensatories, and studying receipts : a clear knowledge of the history of diseases, joined to a thorough acquaintance with the materia medica, and a quick discernment, are the rare qualifications necessary to constitute a good physician ; tho' I believe it may be affirmed with strict justice that *Great-Britain* produces as many such as any country in *Europe*.

THE extreme difficulty of forming a true judgment of diseases is best known to such physicians as were just now described. They know that one disease has frequently the appearance of another, tho' springing from a very different cause, and therefore to be treated in a very different manner. This naturally leads me to say something of Hy-

sterical complaints; another disorder I have professedly undertaken to relieve.

PERSONS subject to this miserable disease, I have constantly observed are of relaxed and delicate constitutions, of quick sensations, and consequently of very irritable fibres. From these observations it will naturally occur, that if, from accident or any other cause, the blood and juices of such subjects become contaminated, their constitutions must be injured; and the delicacy of their frame being incapable of making such powerful exertions, as are necessary to dislodge the enemy, their whole nervous system being tender and exquisitely sensible, receives the first impressions of their disordered habit. As the nerves are distributed thro' every part of the human frame, hence perhaps it is, that the vitiated fluids, more particularly affecting one part of the nervous system than another, produce those sensations, which make the afflicted person conceive she has that complaint, particularly

larly incident to the part affected: how can we otherwise account for hysterical patients at times believing they are troubled with every chronic disease? That the nerves are principally affected in this disorder is demonstrable by the patient's receiving instant relief from fœtid and volatile medicines, and by the return of their complaints, as soon as those medicines have expended their force, which generally happens in a very short time: and therefore it is that medicines of this tribe never cure hysterical affections. Having carefully attended to these circumstances, it was clear to me that this stubborn disease would readily yield to a medicine so compounded, as to brace up the relaxed habit, correct the vitiated crasis of the blood and juices, and at the same time give a strong vibration to the nerves. Conformably with this theory, I most happily united in a medicine such ingredients as have always had this surprising good effect. I have administered it to many hysterical patients, some dreadfully

fully bad, whom it relieved in a shorter time than I care to mention; nor can I recollect one instance in which it failed of doing service.

I HAVE frequently observed too with infinite concern, that gouty people, whose constitutions have been debilitated by an improper treatment, are frequently afflicted with hysterical and hypocondriacal complaints; diseases, tho' not exactly similar, yet in many instances much alike; and as both of them produced the most melancholy and horrible ideas, it is not to be wondered at, that such sufferers should wish for a fit of the gout, in order to get rid of a worse complaint. The methods however generally pursued in order to effect this purpose have seldom answered, and have too frequently so shocked and disordered the human frame, that it has not been in the power of medical art to restore it; the consequence of which has often pushed on the unhappy subjects of these complaints to acts
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of suicide, in order to get rid of a life, the continuance of which appears to them more dreadful than death itself.

If persons labouring under these miserable complaints are not too far gone, I am persuaded it is in my power to restore them. Humanity (and not vanity, or an improper attachment to my interest) prompts me to say this. I must be weak indeed not to see, if my pretensions are ill founded, they must soon fall, and subject me to deserved contempt. Confident however of my integrity, and the uprightness of my intentions, I shall risk the consequence, and rely on the candor of the public, and on the faithful representation of such people, as may think proper to put themselves under my care.

Ashton, near Bristol, May 30, 1775.

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